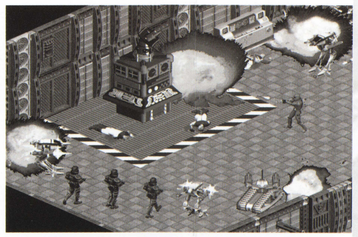
NEWS IN BRIEF

SATELLITE MONITORING STATION DESTROYED

The Titicaca Satellite Monitoring Station in the Andes Mountains was destroyed late Wednesday night in a terrorist attack, leaving nine dead.

According to a release issued today by the Andes Region Administrative Office of the Vigilance Cartel, the remote but lightly defended station was completely destroyed by a small group of terrorists using sophisticated anti-personnel weapons and high explosives. Seven Security Cartel guards and two Vigilance Cartel technicians were killed, and three more techs were injured in the attack. Although the terrorists' tactics showed a reckless disregard for civilian life and property, luckily there were no other casualties. Details of how the terrorists reached and accomplished their objective are being withheld for security reasons. The exact cost of the facility is classified, but the news release puts the monetary cost of replacing it at "well above" 1.5 million credits.

The attack may mark an ominous shift in the tactics of anti-Consortium forces, according to General Salvatore Adkinson, an expert in terrorist activities with MilOps Cartel. In an exclusive *Top Line* interview, General Adkinson said, "This attack was not the work of a few disgruntled locals. It seems to be the work of a well-trained, heavily armed paramilitary force striking from some unknown central location. If so, this represents a dramatic upswing in terrorist efficiency and deadliness.



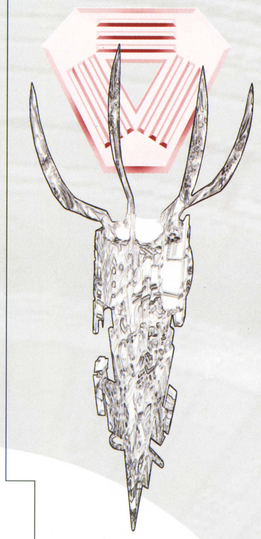
"The advantage that we have against such tactics, however, is that it makes it much easier for the authorities to trace and locate rebel forces. A heavily armed strike force, no matter how well-trained, can't simply appear out of thin air, then vanish the same way."

According to a spokesman, Security Cartel officials are still considering their response to the attack, but a dramatic increase in defensive measures for monitoring stations is a "virtual certainty."

Security Cartel reconstruction of terrorist assault on the Titicaca Satellite Monitoring Station in the Andes Mountains.

BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

TRUE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE HORIZON



After more than two centuries of looking, Consortium scientists say they are right on the brink of finally achieving the holy grail of cybernetics — a true autonomous artificial intelligence.

The first real electronic individual could be on line within as little as five to ten years, according to the experts at the Consortium's Global Cybernetics Forum, held all this week in Perth.

The most exciting revelation at this year's forum was the conference on Project: SHODAN, a previously confidential long-term research project of the Cybernetics Cartel, based in Chicago. SHODAN is designed to produce a program that's not only capable of human-like thought and emotion, but that also far surpasses human intelligence levels. Dr. Titania Omolu held spellbound the capacity audience in the 40000 seat main auditorium of the Perth Hall of Commerce with her presentation, describing how a fully functional SHODAN AI could manage and maintain all the operations and functions of a self-contained orbital research facility housing more than 1000 citizens with only minimal human support.

Although excitement over the SHODAN project has dominated the conference so far, an equally enthusiastic response about a much more imminent goal is expected after tonight's keynote address by Dr. Gregor Hoffman, chairman of the Inter-Consortium Cybernetics Committee. Dr. Hoffman will speak on recent developments in biomechanical enhancements for military and security purposes.

A fully-sentient artificial intelligence may soon be a reality.

SPORTS

HOGAN TAKES EQUATORIAL CUP

Billions of racing fans worldwide tuned in yesterday to watch Rashid Hogan win his second Equatorial Cup and become the Stratospheric Racing Association's new world champion.

Hogan, flying for the Mining Cartel, completed his circumnavigation in three hours, 21 minutes and 51.73 seconds, a scant 2 minutes 24.1 seconds short of the record set by Edna Gershwin in '79. Kim Garvey, flying for the Undersea Resource Cartel, came in second at 3: 25: 19.44, and Linda Smith, of the Chemical Cartel, took a distant third at 3: 37: 41.33.

The field of 90 fliers took off at 10:30 from Sumatra under fair skies, but higher-than-expected winds north of the Marquises were blamed for this year's failure to produce a new world record.

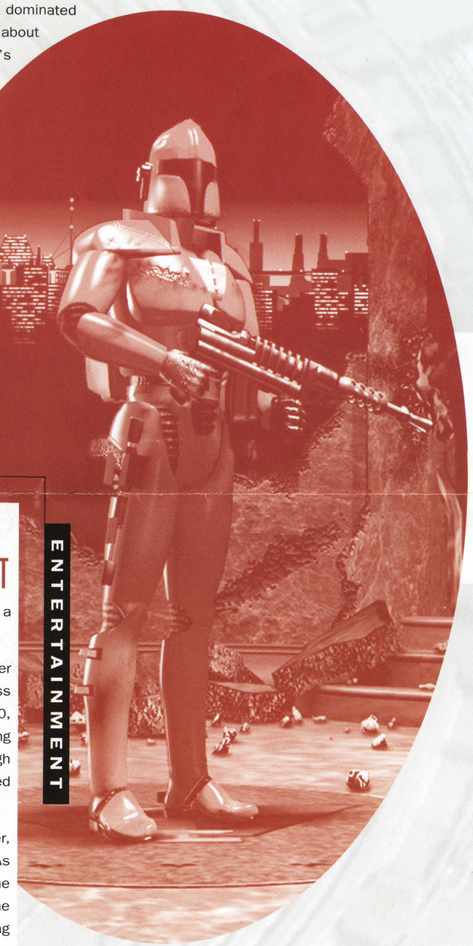
Two fliers were forced to abandon the race due to mechanical failure. Geoffrey Nee, flying for Home Recreation, experienced a navigational system failure and made a safe landing at Quito, and Mischa Hoagland of Pharmaceuticals experienced a surge in his power system and had to eject over the Atlantic. He was recovered, unharmed, a few minutes later. Of the rest of the field, all fliers completed the circumnavigation in less than four hours.

This was Hogan's seventh Equatorial Cup race. He placed third in '90, then failed to place in the top 10 until '94, when he won. Last year he placed 9th. This is his first year flying for Mining.

This year's race marks yet another humiliation for the Aerospace Cartel, which monopolized the cup for decades, winning 24 of the first 30 races, but which hasn't been able to place a flier in the top 10 for the last six years. This year the Aerospace entry was piloted by Lyle Gershwin, son of the current World Record holder, in his first Equatorial Cup. Gershwin took 19th, a very respectable finish for a rookie, and the prognosticators are saying that if Aerospace can hold on to the young pilot for a few years, he could someday return the Cup to Aerospace headquarters.

ENTERTAINMENT

"I, CRUSADER VII": ACTION-FEST DAMPENED BY IMPLAUSIBLE PLOT



Spring is here again, and you know what that means citizen...that's right, a new entry in the long-running *I, Crusader* action series.

Like the previous entries in the series, the viewpoint character is Silencer Captain Will Strang, played, as always, by the massive and apparently ageless Colin Mann. Mann has publicly stated that he plars to finish at least 10, and maybe 12, *I, Crusader* features before passing on his helmet, and judging from this entry in the series he's going to make it. Strang blasts his way through hoards of terrorists, subversives and other sinister types with all the stone-faced enthusiasm he displayed more than a decade ago in the original *I, Crusader.*

Crusader VII follows the successful formula of its predecessors to the letter, juxtaposing cinematic sections with first-person interactive action scenes. As always in this series, the viewpoint character is practically unkillable, and the correct responses are blindingly obvious. But what they lack in game play the action scenes more than make up for in sheer spectacle, combining amazing live-action stunts and pyrotechnics with state-of-the-art interactivity algorithms to create one of the most jaw-clenching, mind-frying interactive feature experiences around.

All the regulars are back for this outing, including the wonderful Ilsa Navarro as General Drake, Strang's long-suffering C.O. As always, there's an exotic newcomer to play the Silencer's love interest. This time it's the fascinating Rosalita Chaing, whose image will doubtlessly soon grace the cubical walls of adolescent males the world over.

If you enjoy this kind of red-blooded action fare there's no point in indulging in critical carping. The only thing I didn't like about this iffie was the villain. Josef Davis does a nicely sinister job in the role of The Saracen, but I just couldn't buy the concept of an ex-Silencer turned mercenary terrorist. Everybody knows that between the Silencer Corps applicant screening and psych-conditioning, Silencers are completely loyal to the Consortium for life. There are enough real villains out there that I think this iffie could have done just as well without this implausible boogie-man for a bad guy.

Reviewed by David Matisse

Colin Mann stands tall as Captain Will Strang in the latest installment of the popular *I, Crusader* action series, a jaw-clenching, mind-frying interactive feature experience.

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TOPICS

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NEWS IN BRIEF

LIFESTYLE

ASK TRINA!

Dear Trina: I'm a fabric synthesist in a textile plant. I've been working here for several years, and have numerous commendations for productivity and efficiency. A few months ago, a new quality control analyst was assigned to my production cell, and we immediately hit it off. We've become good friends at facility mixers and cartel-sponsored Group Recreation Programs. Needless to say, we never let our relationship interfere with our jobs.

Well, a week ago my friend asked me if I'd be interested in sharing some personal recreation time together. I was, of course, thrilled with the idea! We both asked our cell supervisors and our department manager for authorization, and it was quickly given. All those supervisors knew us both and knew that we don't let our personal lives impact our task performance. We started to make plans for our first evening out.

Imagine our shock, Trina, when the Facility Personnel Office rejected our request! Those people barely know us! Why would they think that our relationship would erode our productivity? Do you think this is fair? I'm thinking about requesting a re-assignment.

Signed: Stymied

Dear Stymied: Well, first to answer your question, yes, I do think the policies of the WEC are fair. There's a reason that employees in the same facility are required to get authorization up through several levels of management before being permitted non-work-related fraternization. It's so that the task-impact potential of the relationship can be evaluated not only on the basis of the personalities of the individuals themselves, but also according to the objective policies of the facility involved. Everybody experiences work-related frustration some time, but once you cool down I think you'll understand why you sometimes have to put the efficiency of the cartel ahead of your personal wishes.

And I definitely don't think you should ask for a re-assignment! After all, you and your friend still have all those wonderful cartel-sponsored activities to see each other at (always within the boundaries of fraternization policy, of course), plus the satisfaction of working together every day. My advice to you is to stay where you are, keep your job-performance up to standard, and make the best use of the many opportunities your cartel gives you to get to know your friend better. Who knows? Maybe the next request you send up the chain of command will be for nuptial authorization!

Trina Jenkins

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

By the People, or For the People?

Among the many improbable ideals of our ancestors was "a government by the people, for the people." It's a noble-sounding concept, but today, thanks to modern, scientific social research, we know that it's impossible to achieve. You can have a government by the people, or a government for the people, but you can't have both.

The WEC is a government for the people, organizing its citizen/partners effectively for the greater good of all. A government by the people — i.e. mob rule — could not possibly attain the same degree of general well being as the efficient, scientific rule of the World Economic Consortium and its member cartels.

There are those, however, who even in this enlightened modern era still wish to return to a government *by* the people. These sinister, clandestine forces seek to use terrorism and guerrilla warfare to support their misbegotten ideals. They say that they're fighting for "freedom."

What nonsense! The WEC is the most free society the world has ever known. We are free from poverty, free from disease, free from hunger, free from crime, free from general social unrest (except for those last few fanatics who seek to promulgate their insane views through violence). We already have all the freedoms that really matter.

What kind of "freedom" do these subversive forces offer in return? The freedom to violently threaten the security of the populace? The freedom to spread lies and careless, unscientific and unproductive theories? The freedom to let productivity and efficiency deteriorate until our great civilization is reduced to a state of anarchy and barbarism? These are the only "freedoms" that can be expected from a "government by the people."

Give me government *for* the people — one where scientifically trained professional administrators see to the needs of the populace, and place each citizen/partner in the role where he can best contribute to the general good. Prosperity, security, efficiency — that's what *I* call real freedom!

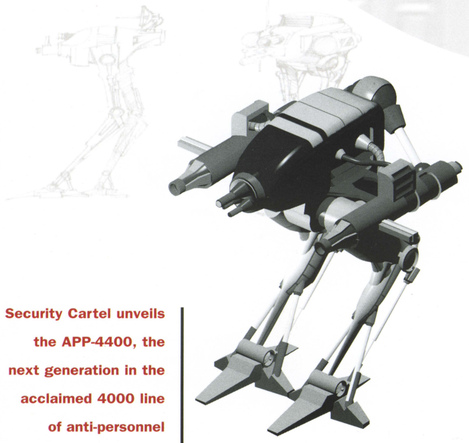
Nathaniel Draygan, Chairman, WEC

ANOTHER SERVICE OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CONSORTIUM

NEWS

SC UNVEILS NEW SECURITY SERVOMECHS

Two new security servomechs were unveiled yesterday at the Security Cartel central R&D labs in Berne, European Region. The new servomechs are the next generation in the acclaimed 4000 line of anti-personnel security platforms, and a radical new concept that combines the efficiency of a maintenance servomech with effective security capabilities.



Security Cartel unveils the APP-4400, the next generation in the acclaimed 4000 line of anti-personnel security platforms

The APP-4400 is a larger, more deadly cousin to the APP-4210, currently the most popular military-grade security platform in the world. The 4400 features twin 60-mm pulse cannons and fire-resistant polyalloy titanium armor, and is capable of a top speed of 45 kph. Effective immediately, 4210s are being taken out of production, and the 4400 will be phased in over the next two years to replace the older model.

The MS-110 is the first general production model in a new line of servomechs that combine the versatility and convenience of a general purpose maintenance model with defensive armament and advanced security programming. The MS-110 will be used both as a secondary defensive measure in high-security areas, and as a primary defensive tool in many less-sensitive technical and industrial facilities. In addition to being programmable for a wide variety of mechanical, custodial and technical duties, the MS-110 also mounts a .30 caliber defensive weapon. All the MS-110's functions are controlled by an advanced, 2 teraops CPU cluster.

At the servomechs' introduction ceremony, Professor Joseph Wilmar, Executive Engineer in Charge of Special Weapons and Armor Development, said, "Together, these two revolutionary designs mark a dramatic leap forward in the security, and therefore the efficiency, of Consortium facilities worldwide."

ADVERTISING

Safety Productivity!

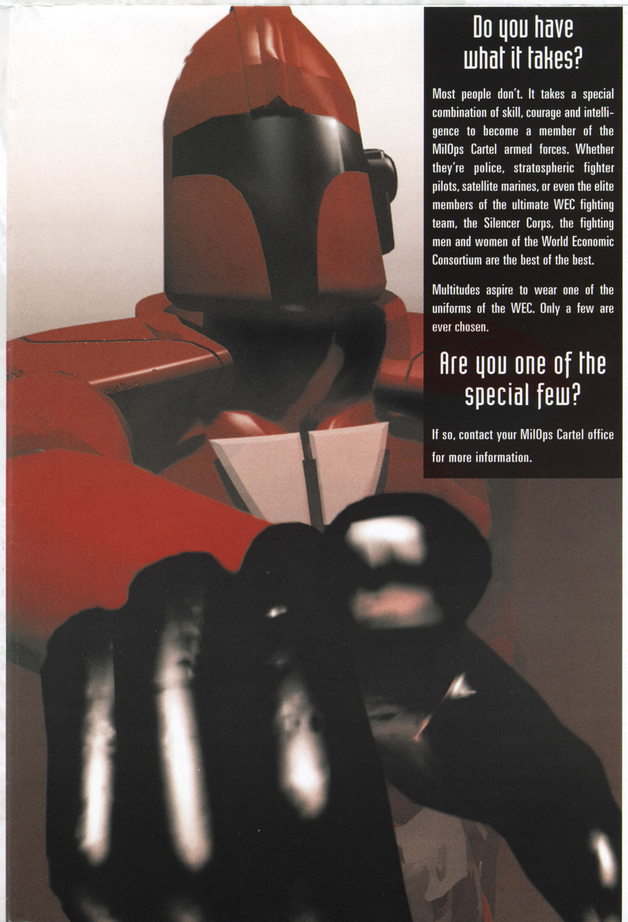
We know that as a dedicated citizen-partner of the WEC, you want to meet your quotas and enhance your Personal Productivity Index. That's one goal we all share.

But there's a right way and a wrong way to do anything. When it comes to saving time and increasing productivity, cutting corners in safety is the WRONG WAY.

Productivity analysis reveals that when safety regs are followed to the letter, industrial site productivity increases an average of 4 to 9 percent.

Safety "shortcuts" get you nowhere fast. Cutting corners on safety will not only decrease your productivity, it also puts you at risk of serious injury or even death, and if you're injured as a result of ignoring safety regs, you or your heirs will be held liable for all repair costs stemming from the accident, as well as your years of lost productivity. It's just not worth the risk.

This public service message brought to you by the WEC Citizen Productivity Cartel.



Do you have what it takes?

Most people don't. It takes a special combination of skill, courage and intelligence to become a member of the MilOps Cartel armed forces. Whether they're police, stratospheric fighter pilots, satellite marines, or even the elite members of the ultimate WEC fighting team, the Silencer Corps, the fighting men and women of the World Economic Consortium are the best of the best.

Multitudes aspire to wear one of the uniforms of the WEC. Only a few are ever chosen.

Are you one of the special few?

If so, contact your MilOps Cartel office for more information.